

Foundation of Hope Talks

These are all messages used during workshops with the Adult Development ministry resources they include both Instructor's & Participants Notes.

1. <u><i>How to Make a Fresh Start</i></u>
2. <u><i>How Can I Be Happy</i></u>
3. <u><i>Power Strategies for Personal Success</i></u>
4. <u><i>Success in Spite of Circumstances</i></u>
5. <u><i>Steps to a Fantastic Future</i></u>
6. <u><i>How to Handle Life's Hurts</i></u>
7. <u><i>Healing for The Broken Hearted</i></u>
8. <u><i>Integrity on the Job</i></u>
9. <u><i>You Got to Have Faith</i></u>
10. <u><i>God's Can Do Attitude</i></u>
11. <u><i>Reaching Your Dreams</i></u>
12. <u><i>How to Have a Successful Life</i></u>
13. <u><i>How to Enjoy Any Job</i></u>
14. <u><i>How to Keep on Believing</i></u>
15. <u><i>Overcoming Fear of My Future</i></u>
16. <u><i>Earning Respect</i></u>
17. <u><i>Seven Thoughts for Positive People</i></u>
18. <u><i>How To Deal With Doubt</i></u>
19. <u><i>Work!</i></u>
20. <u><i>Restoring Biblical Dignity to Work</i></u>

#1 How to Make a Fresh Start Isaiah 43:18-19

The Lord says "Forget about what has happened before. Do not think about the past. (Instead) look at the new thing I am going to do." Isaiah 43:18-19 (NCV)

- Circle "forget" and "new thing."

How to Make a Fresh **S.T.A.R.T.** in 2003

Stop: MAKING EXCUSES

"A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance." Proverbs 28:13 (LB) (Admit and quit – verse)

- Start accepting responsibility – don't fight a "shadow war", you made choices
- Stop blaming others or making rationalizations for my choices
- Choose how to respond to hurts
- Be honest and face up to my problems- most of the problems were my own choices

Common Causes of Failure:

We don't PLAN AHEAD

"A sensible man watches for problems and prepares to meet them. The fool never looks ahead and suffers the consequences." Proverbs 27:12 (LB)

We don't LISTEN TO OTHER PEOPLE

"Plans fail without good advise." Proverbs 15:22 (NCV)

- Don't think you know it all

We GIVE UP TOO SOON

"If you give up when trouble comes, it shows that you are weak." Proverbs 24:10 (NCV)

- During trying times, we just quit trying
- You're not a failure, until you give up
- Never let the fear of "striking out" stop you from taking a swing

Take: STOCK

"You have experienced many things. Were all those experiences wasted? I hope not!" Galatians 3:4 (ICB)

Review your experiences

- Don't waste your experiences, they are exactly what God wants to use
- God allowed them for His purposes

Ask: WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

- Look back over your lifetime when you ask this.

WHAT ARE MY ASSETS?

- What do I have going for me

WHO CAN HELP?

- Recognize you need someone by your side
- God will bring people into your lives to help you

Act: IN FAITH

- It's the key to changing anything in your life

"According to your faith will it be done to you." Matthew 9:29 (NIV)

- You get out of life what you expect
- Start expecting more

"We should make plans – counting on God to direct us." Proverbs 16:9 (LB)

- Goal is a dream with a deadline put on it
- God wants you to get the most out of life
- Get on with it

"Being afraid of people can get you into trouble." Proverbs 29:25 (NCV)

- Don't make the mistake of worrying about what others think

Refocus: MY THOUGHTS

"Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts." Proverbs 4:23 (GN)

- The way you think is the way you feel
- Change the negative thinking

"Happy are those who...are always meditating on God's Word. They are like trees along a river ...that do not dry up. They succeed in everything they do." Psalm 1:1-3 (GN)

Trust: GOD TO HELP ME SUCCEED

- Depend on God, not myself
- Remember the choices you made, that have you where you are today
- You don't get a fresh start by trying, but by trusting God

"You will not succeed by your own strength or power, but by My Spirit." says the Lord.
Zechariah 4:6 (NCV)

"When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 (LB)

S.T.A.R.T – Today!

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How to Make a Fresh S.T.A.R.T.

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Ask: WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

WHAT ARE MY ASSETS?

WHO CAN HELP?

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S.T.A.R.T Today!!!



LIFE INNER CITY

How Can I Be Happy? # Instructor's Notes

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Solomon asked the question about one thousand years ago: Look at Ecc. 6:6 (LB) "Though a man lives a thousand years twice over, but doesn't find contentment—what's the use?"

It doesn't matter how long we live, Solomon says, if we don't find contentment, if we don't find happiness, what's the use? What difference does it make how long I live, if I don't enjoy life while I'm living. So Solomon began a life long search for satisfaction. In his search for satisfaction, Solomon tried a lot of things, and we're going to look at five of the things that Solomon tried in his search for satisfaction.

In Ecc. 2:1, it says, "I decided to enjoy myself and find out what happiness is." Solomon was uniquely qualified for this search for happiness. Why? Because the Bible says he was the wisest man who ever lived, and he was also the wealthiest man who ever lived. Even by today's standards, he was wealthier than any man today. In Ecc. 2 the Bible says that he searched out five different things. He found out that none of them satisfied. Now he's not saying these things are wrong things, he just saying that in and of themselves, these things will not bring happiness or satisfaction.

So, the **first thing** that I want you to see is that **education doesn't satisfy**. The idea is, if I only knew more.

Ecc. 1:16-18 "...I am better educated than any of the kings before me...(but) the more my wisdom, the more my grief."

It doesn't matter how much I know, my fulfillment meter doesn't go up, it just goes down. If I try to find satisfaction in what I know, it's just not going to work.

The second thing is: **pleasure doesn't satisfy**.

v. 1-3, 10 "I tested pleasure...and laughter... I tried cheering myself with wine, and having a good time... I acquired a harem... I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure... But it proved to be meaningless..."

I tried even to laugh a lot, even tried to drink, I tried sex, I didn't say no to anything. It all proved meaningless!! If I could laugh a little bit, I'd just be happy. In our society we have a lot of laughter without a lot of happiness. A lot of people laugh, but not a lot of people are happy. So pleasure promises more than it can deliver.

The third thing Solomon tried was **achievement**. He found out that achievement or work doesn't satisfy.

v.4-5,20 "Then I tried to find fulfillment by inaugurating a great public works program: homes, gardens, parks...reservoirs...But I turned in despair from hard work as the answer to my search for satisfaction."

You see he tries to find satisfaction in all the work that he does, and all of us work-a-holics can understand that. We try to find satisfaction in our work and what we dream up to fill our time, and Solomon says, it's not going to happen. It's not going to fulfill you.

I n s t r u c t o r s N o t e s

The fourth thing that does not satisfy is **wealth**.

v. 7-8 *"I owned more livestock than anyone else..I piled up silver and gold. In the cultural arts, I organized men's and women's choirs and orchestras."*

What does this mean? Solomon became the wealthiest person ever, and he finds out that things and money don't satisfy. After trying everything that he could with his money and still finding no satisfaction, he became a patron of the arts. He organized choir and orchestras to play in his bedroom. Now that's how big his bedroom was! His house was huge! It was so huge that it took fourteen years to build. The daily provision of food that it required to feed his household was 30 cattle and 100 sheep being slaughtered. Every day to feed his household!! A very extravagant household, wouldn't you say? Incredible amounts of money, yet it proved meaningless, because he found you always want more. Wealth doesn't satisfy!!

The fifth one I want you to see is **success**. **Success doesn't satisfy**.

v.9, 11 *"I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me... Yet when I surveyed all I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless...under the sun."*

Solomon was at the pinnacle of success... whatever he touched turned to gold. BUT! He was still not satisfied.

Think about all these things we've gone through: education, pleasure, achievement, wealth, success. Where is that you're trying to find happiness and satisfaction? It's really something you have to ask yourself. What do you do when everything you've ever wanted isn't enough? You see, Solomon had gotten it all, tried it all, spent it all, and still it wasn't enough.

Through Solomon's book, God is trying to teach us that there are some dead ends in life that we can avoid.

Ecc. 2:17 says Solomon came to this conclusion: *"So I hated life."*

He was fed up and frustrated with life. He's finding out that all these things are like chasing the wind. You'll never catch it! If you chase after fulfillment in life in these 5 things, it's never going to work. They didn't permanently satisfy. So the question is, "What does satisfy?" "What brings happiness?"

The answer is found in the most famous sermon in history. That is Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus gives us 8 keys to happiness. (Matt. 5:3-10).

Jesus starts out each one with "Blessed is..." In today's language that would translate into "Happy is..." If you're blessed, you're happy. "Happy is the man who...." These are called the Beattitudes... what we need to be working toward in our life, that's why they're called keys to happiness.

Get to know God!

Vs. 3, Matt 5. "How happy are those who know their need is for God." The first step toward happiness is to recognize what your real hunger is... and that hunger is for God. If anything

but God is the center of your life, then you're not going to be satisfied. The Bible says that he made you to be a spiritual being and he created within you a God shaped vacuum, that He and only He can fill. And when you try to fill that emptiness with anything but God, it's like trying to put a square peg in a round hole. It simply won't fit. You're made to know God! People try to use these five things as replacements for God in their life. Stop trying to find replacements for God!! So, get to know God!

2. **Trust God when life is disappointing.**

a. Matt.5:4 *"Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them."*

When life is disappointing, when you're mourning, when you're going through a difficult time, God comforts you. Life is a combination of pleasures and pain. If we have to live problem free to be happy, then you know what we're going to be? Miserable. Everybody in this room is going to have to deal with problems in life. If we depend on circumstances in our life to make us happy, face it, we're going to be miserable!! We have to learn to trust God, even when life is disappointing. We have to learn to be happy, not before the problem, not after the problem, we have to be happy IN the problem. Our joy, happiness should never be dependent upon circumstances. Your happiness should be dependent upon your relationship with God and you should trust in Him. The bible says, God will comfort us when we're going through the tough times!

Expect God to meet my needs.

If you expect someone else to meet your needs, then you're going to be disappointed. It's not going to bring fulfillment.

Matt.5:5 *"Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth belongs to them."*

Rather than frantically trying to grab all that you can get, you relax, because God's going to take care of your needs. The whole world belongs to God and He'll use that to meet your needs. Ecc. 2 gives us a good picture of the futility of trying to be happy without God in your life, over the long term. In Ecc. 2:1-11, the words, me, mine, my and I are used 34 times. You get the picture of what Solomon's problem is in his search for happiness. He's incredibly self-centered. Self-centered people are never happy. Why? Because they're never fulfilled. I, myself, cannot meet my own needs. God designed me for my needs to be met by Him. We can never meet our own needs.

Follow God's instructions.

Matt. 5:6 *"Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully."*

Do what God requires and He will satisfy. If you do what God wants you to do, you're going to enjoy life. You're going to be satisfied. God wants you to enjoy life, he doesn't want you just to endure life. So he's created certain principles to live by. You follow God's instructions, the Bible, then we'll find satisfaction and fulfillment. For example, a train is designed to run on tracks. If the train decides to jump the track and run on it's own, it will crash and burn. God's principles for your life are like the train tracks. If you go by the principles in the Bible, then your life is much smoother, but if you get on the track, live your life according to God's principles, and then decide to jump off the track, you know what you're going to do? You're going to crash and burn every time. For some of you it's going to take longer than others. The key to happiness: follow God's instructions.

Cultivate a forgiving heart.

v. 7 *"Happy are the kind and merciful, for they will be shown mercy."*

In your search for happiness, you grow a forgiving heart. The great destroyer of happiness is bitterness, resentment. You can't be resentful and happy at the same time. We will be hurt intentionally and unintentionally by people in life. What matters is how we will respond to that hurt. When we hold onto a grudge against someone else, bitterness grows, and we can't have happiness when we're holding onto a hurt. So we have to grow a heart that forgives, that looks past the hurt. **Read verse seven above.** When we are hurt by someone else, we need to be kind and merciful—forgiving. Don't let your life be paralyzed by that hurt. Some of you are letting people who hurt you in the past, to still control you in the present. You're still holding onto resentment and hurt and it's controlling you in the present. Your resentment is hurting you, not that other person. So, cultivate a forgiving heart. The great destroyer of happiness is bitterness and resentment.

Another great destroyer of happiness is guilt.

3. Maintain a clear conscience.

v. 8 "Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God."

Guilt destroys happiness, so maintain a clear conscience. When you have the fear of getting caught, so you carry around guilt. The happiest people are those who live with integrity. They're transparent—what you see is what you get. One of the benefits of a guilt free life is that you can have a short memory. You don't have to remember what you said to this person or that person, because you always tell the truth. You maintain a clear conscience. You live with integrity. Be pure in heart and live guilt free. That's what a relationship with Jesus is all about. You come to Jesus, tell him about the sin in your life. He's ready to forgive. You confess your sin, he wants to forgive your sin. You can maintain a guilt free life.

4. Build healthy relationships.

v. 9 "*Happy are the peacemakers...*"

Just as guilt destroys happiness, so it is with conflict. The Lord tells us, "happy are the peacemakers." Don't miss opportunities to grow and cultivate close friendships. It doesn't matter if you gain everything in the whole world, and miss out on relationships with people, then you've lost. When your relationships aren't going well, then life is bad—it stinks! God made us for relationships, and we need relationships. If you're unhappy in life, maybe you need to make some relational repairs!! Jesus wants us to build healthy relationships.

5. Live with an eternal perspective.

v. 9-10 "*Happy are those who are persecuted because they are good... a tremendous reward awaits you in heaven.*"

Righteousness, or being good, doing the right things, isn't always the easy thing to do or the popular thing to do. But you will have eternity to enjoy the rewards. The key to this principle is perspective—living with an eternal perspective. If you're trying to run after the five things Solomon tried, then you're not going to have happiness. Why? Because your perspective is all messed up. Why should I do the right thing in life? Because there's more to life than the here and now. Many of you are living for the here and now, but you need to look ahead to eternity. Our lives are preparation for eternity. The only thing that brings happiness is a relationship with Jesus Christ. Too often in life we push away the very things that we need in life—sometimes that's a relationship with Jesus Christ.

The five things that Solomon chased after won't bring us happiness in life, but sometimes we spend a lifetime seeking these things. Instead, it's a relationship with Jesus Christ.

How Can I Be Happy?

Solomon, the wisest and wealthiest king that ever lived, asked the question about a thousand years ago:

“Though a man lives a thousand years twice over, but doesn’t find contentment—what’s the use?”
Eccl. 6:6 (LB)

Solomon says if we don’t find contentment, if we don’t find happiness, what’s the use?

So Solomon began a life long search for satisfaction.

“I decided to enjoy myself and find out what happiness is.” Eccl. 2:1

What he found however was:

1. **Education** doesn’t satisfy. The idea is, if I only knew more.

“...I am better educated than any of the kings before me...(but) the more my wisdom, the more my grief.” Eccl. 1:16-18

2. **Pleasure** doesn’t satisfy.

“I tested pleasure...and laughter... I tried cheering myself with wine, and having a good time... I acquired a harem... I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure... But it proved to be meaningless...” Eccl. 1-3, 10

3. **Achievement** or work doesn’t satisfy.

“Then I tried to find fulfillment by inaugurating a great public works program: homes, gardens, parks...reservoirs...But I turned in despair from hard work as the answer to my search for satisfaction.” Eccl. 4-5,20

4. **Wealth** doesn’t satisfy.

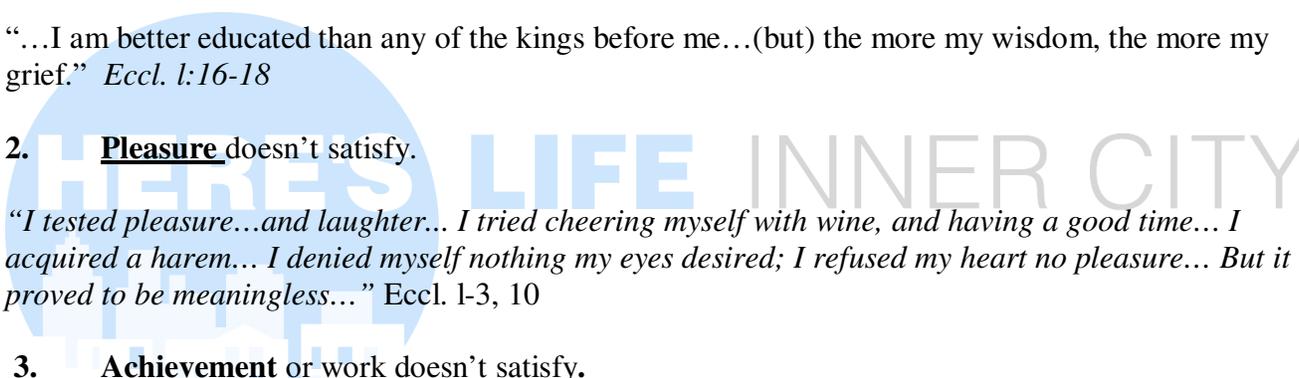
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“I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me... Yet when I surveyed all I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless...under the sun.” Eccl. .9, 11

Solomon was at the pinnacle of success... whatever he touched turned to gold. BUT! He was still not satisfied.

Solomon came to this conclusion: *“So I hated life.”* Ecc. 2:17



So the question is, “What does satisfy?” “What brings happiness?”

The answer is found in the most famous sermon in history: Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Jesus gives us 8 keys to happiness. (Matt. 5:3-10).

Jesus starts out each one with “Blessed is...” In today’s language that would translate into “Happy is...” If you’re blessed, you’re happy. “Happy is the man who....”

These are called the Beatitudes... what we need to be working toward in our life.

They’re called the keys to happiness.

1. **Get to know God!**

“How happy are those who know their need is for God.” Matt 5:3

The first step toward happiness is to recognize what your real hunger is... and that hunger is for God. Stop trying to find replacements for God!!

Trust God when life is disappointing.

a. *“Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them.” Matt.5:4*

We have to learn to trust God, even when life is disappointing. We have to learn to be happy, not before the problem, not after the problem, we have to be happy **IN** the problem. Our joy, happiness should never be dependent upon circumstances.

Expect God to meet my needs.

“Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth belongs to them.” Matt.5:5

God designed me for my needs to be met by Him. We can never meet our own needs.

Follow God’s instructions.

“Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully.” Matt. 5:6

Do what God requires and He will satisfy. If you do what God wants you to do, you’re going to enjoy life.

You follow God’s instructions, the Bible then we’ll find satisfaction and fulfillment. The key to happiness: follow God’s instructions.

Cultivate a forgiving heart.

“Happy are the kind and merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” v. 7

The great destroyer of happiness is bitterness that results in resentment. You can’t be resentful and happy at the same time.

When we are hurt by someone else, we need to be kind and merciful—forgiving. Don’t let your life be paralyzed by that hurt

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“Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God.” vs. 8

Guilt destroys happiness, so maintain a clear conscience. Be pure in heart and live guilt free. That’s what a relationship with Jesus is. You come to Jesus, tell him about the sin in your life. He’s ready to forgive. You confess your sin, he wants to forgive your sin. You can maintain a guilt free life.

Build healthy relationships.

“Happy are the peacemakers...” v. 9

Just as guilt destroys happiness, so it is with conflict. When your relationships aren’t going well, then life is bad—it stinks! God made us for relationships, and we need relationships. If you’re unhappy in life, maybe you need to make some relational repairs!! Jesus wants us to build healthy relationships.

Live with an eternal perspective.

“Happy are those who are persecuted because they are good... a tremendous reward awaits you in heaven.” v. 9-10

Righteousness, or being good, doing the right things, isn’t always the easy thing to do or the popular thing to do. But you will have eternity to enjoy the rewards. The only thing that brings happiness is a relationship with Jesus Christ. Too often in life we push away the very things that we need in life—sometimes that’s a relationship with Jesus Christ.

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Power Strategies for Personal Success

Hebrews II: 23-27

The Bible is full of ordinary people who accomplished extraordinary things. God chose Moses because Moses chose God. Moses settled 4 key issues in his life:

- *Identity: Who am I? (vs. 24)
- *Responsibility: What will I do with my life? (vs.25)
- *Priority: What is really most important? (vs. 26)
- *Difficulty: How much am I willing to commit? (vs. 27)

In each issue, Moses chose God. This is the foundation for personal success:

I. Discover what God made me to be.

Moses was born a Hebrew slave--raised as Pharaoh's grandson in his palace. Now Moses has an identity crisis: am I slave or royalty, Hebrew or Egyptian? Moses refused to live a lie.

"By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter." (vs. 24)

The word "refused" in Bible language means disowned, rejected; left no door open to be known as son of Pharaoh's daughter. God made each one of us for a purpose. Be who God made me to be--not like somebody else!!

2. Accept responsibility for my life.

Stop making excuses and blaming other people for my life. You need to take the initiative for yourself. If you want to be successful--then it's your choice. He chose--Moses chose!

"He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time." (vs. 25)

We are given choices by God--Moses chose God. Vs. 24 says when he had grown up, he began accepting responsibility for his life. It's a mark of maturity in your life. You stop blaming others. Moses chose God's way because he wanted to go God's way. From Moses, we can count on 3 facts in life:

1. I can't live off others' spiritual commitment.

You need a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. When Moses grew up he chose God!

2. I can't blame others for the direction of my life.

Society will tell you the exact opposite--blame others; we can't control all

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circumstances in life, but we can control our response. Our response really makes the difference.

3. No one can ruin my life except me.

I'm free to choose my response. Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of life is my response to life. I make choices every day.

3. Establish a value system for my life.

What's really important in life? Vs. 26 says, "*He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*"

The word regarded means he looked at, evaluated all that was going on in his life. It takes time to seriously consider and evaluate what I'm living for. Can you tell me the 5 or 10 values/priorities you're building your life upon? Think about that this week--write them out for yourself. If you don't decide what's important for your life, someone else will! The world is ready to promote it's value system of:

- Power/Prestige (vs. 24)**
- Pleasure (vs. 25)**
- Possessions (vs. 26)**

Moses had all of those values, but he walked away from it? Why? He knew all those things don't last. To be successful, you've got to learn to say NO!! I'm not going to compromise my values and priorities.

Moses' Value System:

God's purpose is more valuable than popularity (vs. 24)

God has a purpose and plan for your life--it's more valuable than anything else!

People are more valuable than pleasures (vs. 25)

Moses left temporary pleasure to choose God's priorities for himself. People are more important than pleasures. God's people needed to be set free!!

God's peace is more valuable than possessions (vs. 26)

Reject the world's treasure (vs. 26). Possessions never give us inner peace--it comes from doing what God made me to do! Moses was looking ahead to his reward. He had PERSPECTIVE! God's values for life. Your values are determined by your goals, and your goals (vision) happen because of your perspective.

If you have the right perspective, then you'll never take your eyes off the goal!!

4. Never take my eyes off the goal.

Vs. 27 says, "*By faith, he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered*"

because he saw Him who is invisible.”

Persevered means he was focused on his goal. He kept the goal before him and persisted!! Moses refused to give up--he kept at the goal, even though he waited a long time (setting the Israelites free to the promised land, was 80 years!!). He persevered! **God's delays are not God's denials!** Don't get discouraged.

Heb. 12:1&2 says, “...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus...”

What are your eyes on? What is your focus in life?



LIFE INNER CITY

Power Strategies for Personal Success

Moses settled 4 key issues: Heb. 11:23-27

- 1) Identity: Who am I? (vs. 24)
- 2) Responsibility: What will I do with my life? (vs. 25)
- 3) Priority: What is really most important? (vs. 26)
- 4) Difficulty: How much am I willing to commit? (vs. 27)

The Foundation for Personal Success

1. Discover what God made me to be. *“By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” (vs. 24)*

2. Accept responsibility for my life. *“He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time” (vs. 25)*

Three facts:

- a. I can’t live off others: spiritual commitment.
- b. I can’t blame others for the direction of my life.
- c. no one can ruin my life except me.

3. Establish a value system for my life.

“He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.” (vs. 26)

The world’s value system:

- Power/Prestige (vs. 24)
- Pleasure (vs. 25)
- Possessions (vs. 26)

Moses’ Value System:

- 1) God’s purpose is more valuable than popularity (vs. 24)
- 2) People are more valuable than pleasures (vs. 25)
- 3) God’s peace is more valuable than possessions (vs. 26)

4. Never take my eyes off the goal.

“By faith, he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw Him who is invisible.” (vs. 27) God’s delays are not God’s denial!!

Hebrews 12: 1 & 2 “...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus...”

Succeeding In Spite of Your Circumstances

There are two laws of life we all need to learn:

- 1) Many times things don't go as planned
- 2) Many circumstances in life are not under our control

We all know people who have overcome great adversity to become successful.

We're going to look at a man named Joseph, who made an impact with his life. He went from the pit to the palace. Through his life, the bible shows us that character, not circumstances will determine what you do with your life. Character really makes the difference. Let's look at his circumstances and see how he dealt with life.

In Gen. 37-50, story of Joseph, it has it all: revenge, deceit, lust, seduction, attempted murder, rape, false charges, imprisonment.

The first 30 years of Joseph's life--nothing went right at all. What are the circumstances?

Joseph's Circumstances

1) **Rejected at home**

Joseph was the second to the last of 11 children. Lots of rivalry, competition, bitterness between the brothers. They were step brothers of Joseph and jealous of him. He came from a broken home--they didn't like him at all.

Gen. 37:4; Gen. 37:22

Put him in a well and sold to slave merchants. They took him to Egypt and sold to a man named Potiphar--he became a slave. Overnight he went from pampered, favorite son, to slave. He went from having it all to being a slave.

Some of you have experienced rejection from your family. This guy experienced real rejection by his family. First circumstance you need to see--he was rejected at home.

2) **Slandered at work**

He started working for Potiphar and he was very successful and so he got put in charge of everything in his home. But one thing happened: Potiphar's wife got eyes for Joseph. She tried to seduce him.

Gen. 39:7-10 Circle the word refused.

Sexual harassment in the work place. She grabbed him by the robe and he pulled away, slithered out of his coat. He lost his coat, but NOT his character. so Potiphar's wife framed him. She told Potiphar a lie. Gen. 37:17 Thrown into prison for a crime he didn't commit. Falsely accused--his life is going from bad to worse. Once he's in prison, the third circumstance occurs:

3) **Forgotten in prison**

He became friends with 2 of Pharaoh's staff members and he tells them to remember him when there to help him get out of prison.

Gen. 40:14-23

Joseph had helped these guys while in prison but now they've forgotten him. Remember this: sometimes in life, when you're trying to be successful, jealous people will try to hurt you, and moral people will try to tempt you, and ambitious people will try to use you; but you can still succeed if the Lord is in your life.

Key verse at the top of your notes: Gen. 39:23

Three times the Bible says of Joseph's life...the Lord was with Joseph. Why was God with Joseph? Because of his character. What about his character?

What about his character that made him so different? What do I do to make an impact with my life? To be successful when everything around me is conspiring to make me mediocre? We can learn some things from Joseph in all his circumstances. Let's see what there was about his character that really made the difference in his life.

Joseph's Character

1) Fulfill my responsibilities

He was dependable, reliable, he always gave his best--no matter what! As a result, he's promoted in leadership: first as slave. Gen. 39:6

Potiphar had no worries because of Joseph. Will your boss say that about you? Potiphar prospered because of Joseph. He always fulfilled his responsibilities.

Gen. 39:22-23

Joseph is a prisoner in jail, falsely accused and then put in charge of the whole jail. He must have been a man of character. He gets promoted again.

Gen. 41:38

The quality of your work reveals the quality of your spiritual life. The Holy Spirit was obvious in Joseph's life--is that true of your life? Joseph was the best he could be no matter what he was called to do.

Luke 16:10 **Great law of success: God says give it your best now!**

2) Maintain his integrity

Joseph was a man of absolute moral purity. Gen. 39:10 Circle the word "refused". Joseph must be thinking, "I've lost my dream, I'm a slave in a foreign country, and nothing in my life is going right, why don't I lose my morals too?" BUT he doesn't think that way! He maintains his integrity!

What motivates a guy like this? Gen. 39:8-9 The bible says two things motivated Joseph: 1) His loyalty to others (vs 8) 2) His love for God (vs 9)

Great principles for us to learn: when we sin we hurt others: Prov. 14:32 In the long run, it always pays to do the right thing.

3) Trust God's sovereignty

He's in control! When Joseph was young--God gave him a dream about his life, but didn't really explain it at the time. Then for 30 years everything went wrong in Joseph's life, until he's promoted to run the land for Potiphar. Joseph was blessed by God. Tell the story of Joseph rescuing his brothers from the famine--the very brothers who got him into all of this. Gen. 45:7,8

Lessons in life:

- 1) Pain often has a hidden purpose--rarely understand the pain at the time
- 2) god redirects our lives through failure, mistakes, disappointments, and broken dreams; God is always in the middle of directing our lives. We have to remember to let him do it. Gen 50:20

Victim is a word used a lot today. Many of you have been victims--you've been harmed by others. But you need to remember: God means it for good. God can take all the bad stuff in your life and use it for good--if you let Him.

Great law of success is this:

1) God has a plan that is greater than your problem!

Your problems are not bigger than God's plan for your life. god wants to develop you into what you ought to be--as he did in Joseph's life.

What do you do when circumstances keep you from being successful?

Prov. 3:5,6 Don't try to figure it out yourself. When in tough circumstances, ask yourself three questions:

- 1) Is it my fault?
- 2) What can I learn from this?
- 3) How does God want me to act in this circumstance?

Great verse to summarize Joseph's life: Phil. 1:27



**Great law of success:
It's not so much what happens to you, but what happens through you!**

Succeeding in Spite of Your Circumstances

*"...the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did."
Genesis 39:23*

A. Joseph's Circumstances

1. Rejected at home

"(His brothers) hated him so much they wouldn't speak to him in a friendly manner." Gen. 37:4

"Let's not kill him...let's throw him into this well so he'll die without our touching him!" Gen. 37:22

2. Slandered at work

"After a while his master's wife began to desire Joseph and asked him to go to bed with her. He refused...but she asked day after day..." Gen. 39:7-10

"That Hebrew slave tried to rape me!" Gen. 37:17

3. Forgotten in prison

"...Please be kind enough to mention me to the king and help me get out of this prison...but the wine steward never gave Joseph another thought - he forgot all about him." Gen. 40:14-23

B. Joseph's Character

1. Fulfill my responsibilities

"Potiphar gave Joseph complete responsibility over everything he owned. He hadn't a worry in the world with Joseph there..." Gen. 39:6

"The jailer soon handed over the entire prison administration to Joseph...and had no more worries after that, for Joseph took care of everything..." Gen. 39:22-23

"Pharaoh said, 'Who could do a better job than Joseph? For he is a man who is obviously filled with the Spirit of God.'" Gen. 41:38

"The person who is faithful in the little things will be faithful in big things, and the one who cheats in the little things will cheat in big things too." Luke 16:10

Great Law of Success: God says give it your best now!!

2. Maintain his integrity

"And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her." Gen 39:10

"Wicked people bring about their own downfall by their evil, but good people are protected by their integrity." Prov. 14:32

3. Trust God's sovereignty

"God sent me ahead of you...to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God." Gen. 45:7-8

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Gen. 50:20

Great Law of Success: God has a plan that is greater than your problem!!

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." Prov. 3:5-6

"But WHATEVER HAPPENS, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ." Phil. 1:27

Great Law of Success: It's not so much what happens to you, but what happens through you!!

Steps for a Fantastic Future

“Three days from now you will cross the Jordan to go in and take possession of the land the Lord is giving you for your own.” Joshua 1:11b

A man who accomplished the impossible in spite of incredible odds and opposition was Joshua. His life was one entire battle—one after another. Many of you can identify with that, but he never gave up.

Joshua 1—the Israelites are ready to cross the Jordan to possess the land. Read verse 1:11b. You have a tremendous future ahead of you, everything that God has promised and a whole lot more. But it's going to be a fight, a battle. You must **take possession** of the land. What does our future hold? It's a mixture of blessings and battle. The key to a fantastic future is to possess your future! How do you do that? By taking the same three steps that Joshua took in his life. God gives Joshua a pep talk in Joshua 1. God wants to encourage him in the battles he'll ace over the next 20 years. God tells him if you do these three things, I guarantee you success in your life.

How do you have a fantastic future?

1. **Set up a plan**

You have to plan for your future. God has a plan for you. Read Joshua 1:2-3. Circle “get ready”. Prepare for the future. You have to prepare to possess what God has for your future—what he has promised. Highly successful people have written goals. They have set up a plan for the future. Do you? Successful people don't just drift through life, or go through life unexamined. They write out a plan with goals.

One of the ways to prepare for the future is to **let go of the past**. Joshua and Moses were very close. Now Moses is dead. God tells Joshua that He has a plan for his life. Sometimes we let past relationships keep us from possessing the future. God had a plan for Joshua's life that went far beyond Moses' life. God has a plan for your life that goes far beyond your past—and anything else in your life.

Prov. 20:18

Prov. 13:16

Set up a plan. This week, make plans to fill this in on your outline.

2. **Stay in God's Word**

Joshua is going to be in battle for the next 20 years. God tells Joshua in vs. 7: Don't get sidetracked. In the Christian life, it's easy to get your focus off the best things and get sidetracked into doing some good things. Don't lose focus on God's Word in your life. Some of you will get spiritually sidetracked—you'll get your focus all messed up because you don't stay in God's Word. Read vs. 8. Success is promised here—twice. Keep your mind on God's word and you'll be successful. God's promise for success in your life doesn't depend on your ability. God's promise for success in your life has everything to do with your commitment to God's Word. How do you do this? How do you stay in God's Word? It's here in verse 8. Don't let God's Word depart from your mouth—that means talk about it. Meditate on it day and night. Think about it so that it becomes a part of your mind and who you are. You must be careful to do it—you must live God's Word. That's how you stay in God's Word. You do it daily, not just for a week or a month.

II Timothy 3:16 God's Word straightens me out and helps me do what is right. God's Word is food for the soul. You stay in God's Word.

Joshua is a busy man, a lot like many of you. He's the leader of an entire nation. He made time to read the Bible and stay in God's Word.

My time with God's Word: write out your plan and every morning live with your plan. Stay in God's Word.

3. Step Out in Faith

- a. Faith is an action—it’s more than just knowing. Verse 6,7, and 8: Three times God says, “Be strong and courageous. Take some steps in faith. When they cross the Jordan river, it’s an act of war because there are 7 nations already occupying the land, all with larger armies than Israel. How are they first going to cross the river? What gave Joshua the confidence to move ahead? Verse 9: he was on an assignment from God. When God tells you to do something, he’ll give you the power to do it. So you step out in faith.
 - i. Fear and discouragement are the 2 enemies that keep you from a successful future. Fear keeps us from getting started: Joshua had to cross the river to face 7 nations. Discouragement keeps us from continuing. It stops us dead in our tracks. Joshua teaches us something about being a man of courage.
 - ii. Courage is not the absence of fear, but moving ahead in spite of the fear. It’s going on, moving forward. In Joshua 3:15, the banks of the river are overflowing. The river is full and running rapidly! The priests were told to start walking into the river, and God said he would do the rest. God dammed up the river and it stopped flowing!!
 - iii. Joshua 3:15 The priests stand there in the river while the whole nation crosses: 1 million people!! The principle here is: The first step is always the hardest. You have to take the steps because God wants to use your life.

Where are you in your life? Are you where you know there are things God wants you to do, but you’re afraid, so you’re not going to take any steps?

Are you discouraged?

God wants you to keep moving ahead because he wants to use you. What’s your Jordan River? Your barrier to becoming all God wants you to be? When you step out in faith it requires trust in God. On your outline, write down what you need to trust God for.

Give God your life and the best is yet to come. The name Joshua means “deliverer.” Joshua is the deliverer for his people. God tells Mary to call her baby “Joshua”. Jesus is the Greek word for Joshua in Hebrew.

Jesus too would be a deliverer. Joshua was to take possession of the land. Jesus wants to take possession of your life. Commit your life to God. He wants to do amazing things with your life.

Steps For A Fantastic Future

How to Have A Fantastic Future - Participant

I. Set up a Plan

"Moses, my servant, is dead. Now then, you and all these people get ready to cross the Jordan river...I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses." (vs. 2-3)

"So Joshua ordered...the people 'Get your supplies ready.'" (vs. 11a)

"Don't go charging into battle without a plan." Prov. 20:18

"A wise man thinks ahead..." Prov. 13:16

My Plans:

HERE'S LIFE INNER CITY

2. Stay in God's Word

"Be careful to obey all the Law...do not turn from it to the right or the left that you may be successful wherever you go." (vs. 7)

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." (vs. 8)

"The whole bible was given to us by inspiration from god and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right." II Tim. 3:16

My Time with God's Word:

3. Step Out in Faith

“Be strong and courageous!” (vs. 6, 7, 9)

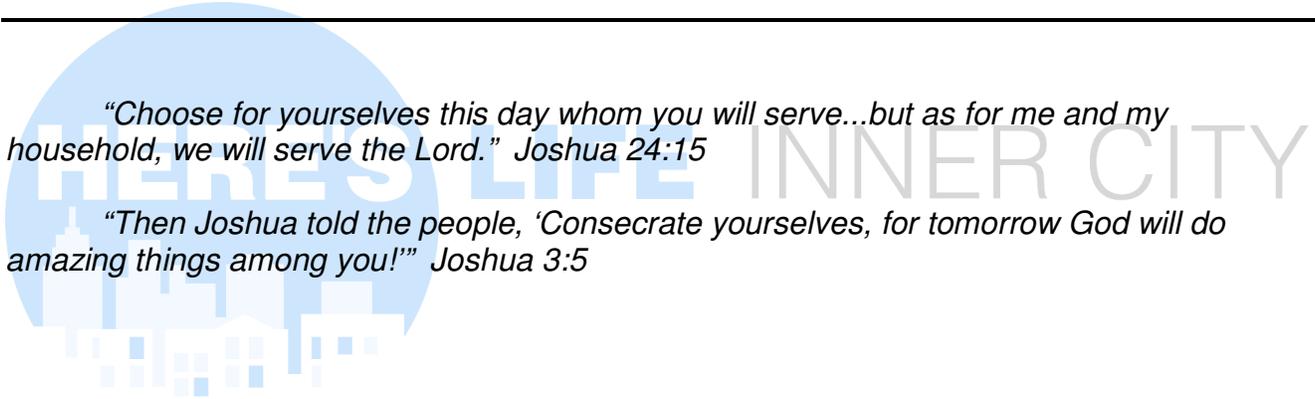
“Remember I have commanded you to be determined and confident! Don’t be afraid or discouraged for I, the Lord, am with you wherever you go.” (vs.9)

“As soon as the priests stepped into the river, the water stopped flowing and piled up...” Joshua 3:15

My Trust in God:

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15

“Then Joshua told the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow God will do amazing things among you!’” Joshua 3:5



#6 How To Handle Life's Hurts – Instructor's Notes

"...my heart is wounded within me. I fade away like an evening shadow."

Psalms 109:22-23

We all have problems and difficulties—nobody's exempt. How do people hurt?

We hurt **PHYSICALLY**. Some people live in continual physical pain.

We hurt **EMOTIONALLY**. It's harder to deal with. Use fear, worry, guilt, anger, and depression to cope. How do we get relief?

We hurt **RELATIONALLY**. This is the most difficult hurt to deal with. We naturally turn to the Psalms--David is so honest about how he feels.

Six ways that don't work handle our hurts: Read Prov 14:12

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. Prov. 14:12

How big a deal is it to God that we hurt?

The Bible says David knew that God was close to him when he was hurting.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Ps 34:18 NIV

IGNORING it.

When we suffer in silence; ignore the problem. The "Clint Eastwood" approach: bite the bullet, be the tough guy, ignore it.

In Ps. 39:2-3 David was overcome with anxiety and it even became worse.

But when I was silent and still, not even saying anything good, my anguish increased.

My heart grew hot within me, and as I meditated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue

The question you need to ask yourself is:

"What am I pretending not to know about myself?

What hurt am I pretending isn't there?" Is it a hurt in a relationship? Trouble with your children?

We pretend it doesn't exist and hope it will go away! You procrastinate when you think,

"One of these days, I'm going to do this or that about my problem."

RUNNING from it.

This is the "Barney Fife" approach--chicken hearted, leave, back off from the problem. Like

David in Ps. 55:6 *I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest--*

Ps 55:6 NIV

It's human nature to run away from difficulties. We never solve a problem by running from it. You'll face it again and again in your life.

HIDING from it.

"Wear a mask". We masquerade around pretending it doesn't exist. Ps. 32:3 NIV says:

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

You become frustrated because you're trying to hide your hurt, or feelings. Somebody asks you, "What's wrong?" and you're quick to reply "Oh nothing!" Many people hide pain in

various ways, but remember: “Revealing my feeling begins the healing.” James 5:16 tells us to confess our faults to one another. Admit to God, yourself and to others your problems.

WORRING about it.

We love to do this. It’s an attempt to control the uncontrollable, to play God! Worry never solves anything.

Ps. 55:2

Ps. 77:4

Ps. 37:8

Worrying is like a rocking chair—your rock back and forth but never gets you anywhere. You go over and over the problem, but never resolve it. You have to work on your problems.

RESENTING your hurt.

You give in to self-pity. Ps. 73:21-23 NIV says :

When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you.

Bitterness + hurt = resentment.

Resentment hurts us worse than the hurt itself! Why? It keeps the hurt with me all the time. It’s like a poison--it prolongs the hurt and pain and never leads to healing. It clouds your perspective and makes you hang onto long ago hurts. It doesn’t change the past, but ruins the future. Thoughts and feelings become full of bitterness.

We try these five things, then we move onto #6.

GIVING up!

Maybe this is where you are today. David knew rock bottom.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD; O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. Ps. 130:1-2 NIV

What is it you’re ready to give up on?

A relationship, a child, your job? It doesn’t fix the problem to give up on it. Giving over is the key!!

Conclusion: What will work?

The first step: Give my hurt to God.

“I bring God all my complaints, I tell Him all my trouble. When I’m ready to give up, He knows what I should do!” Ps. 142:2-3

When you’re powerless to change a situation, you must look to a power beyond yourself. David knew God was greater than His problems.

Jesus is the Truth and the Truth will set you free!

Some of you need to give him your heart, as well, to establish a relationship with God. Lead into prayer of salvation...

How to Handle Life's Hurts

"...my heart is wounded within me. I fade away like an evening shadow." Ps. 109:22-23

In Psalms, David illustrates six ways we normally react to our problems, which only make matters worse.

How People Hurt

We hurt **PHYSICALLY**

We hurt **EMOTIONALLY**

We hurt **RELATIONALLY**

Six Remedies for Hurt that DON'T Work (Proverbs 14:12)

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. Prov. 14:12

IGNORING it

"I kept quiet, not saying a word, but my suffering only grew worse, and I was overcome with anxiety. The more I thought, the more troubled I became." Ps. 39:2-3

RUNNING from it

"I wish I had wings like a dove. I'd fly away and find some rest. I'd flee to some refuge from all this storm!" Ps. 55:6-8

HIDING from it

"There was a time when I wouldn't admit my sin, but dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration." Ps. 32:3

WORRING about it

"...I am worn out by my worries." Ps. 55:2

"...I am so worried I cannot speak!" Ps. 77:4

"Don't give in to worry or anger, it only leads to trouble." Ps. 37:8

RESENTING your hurt

"When my thoughts were bitter and my feelings were hurt, I did not understand you." Ps. 73:21-22

GIVING up!

"From the depth of my despair, I call to you, Lord. Hear my cry, Lord--listen to my call for help." Ps. 130:1-2

III. Conclusion: What will Work?

...the First Step: Give my hurt to **GOD**.

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HEALING FOR A BROKEN HEART

Grace – It's Still Amazing

“God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3 (NIV)

How Does God Heal A Broken Heart?

By changing YOUR HEART.

“Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.” Romans 12:2 (NLT)

How God sees me because of His GRACE.

- I am ACCEPTABLE

“...Christ has accepted you.” Romans 15:7 (NIV)

“You have been chosen by God himself.” I Peter 2:9 (LB)

“Even if my mother and father forsake me, the Lord will receive me.” Psalm 27:10 (NIV)

- I am VALUABLE

“You belong to God...” I John 4:4

**“You have been bought and paid for by Christ so you belong to Him...”
I Corinthians 7:23 (LB)**

“God says, ‘You are precious to Me.’” Isaiah 43:4 (GN)

- I am LOVABLE

“The mountains and hills may crumble but My love for you will never end; so says the Lord who loves you.” Isaiah 54:10 (GN)

- I am FORGIVABLE

“I am the God who forgives your sins, and I do this because of who I am. I will not hold your sins against you.” Isaiah 43:25 (GN)

“...Through what Christ would do for us, God decided to make us holy in His eyes, without a single fault – we stand before Him covered with His love.” Ephesians 1:4 (LB)

- I am CAPABLE

“I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me – I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses inner strength into me, that is, I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency! “

Philippians 4:13 (AMP)

“Once you were less than nothing; now you are God’s own!” II Peter 2:10 (LB)

“May the God of hope fill you with joy...that by the power of the Holy Spirit, your whole life and outlook may be radiant with hope.” Romans 15:13 (Ph)

Integrity on the Job

It's not just a job.

"Work hard and cheerfully at all you do, just as though you were working for the Lord and not merely for your masters, remembering it is the Lord who's going to pay you.. He's the one you are really working for." Colossians 3:23-24 (LB)

Jesus "Anything you've done for one of my brothers here however humble, you've done for me." Matthew 25:40 (NEB)

I. **The benefits of serving others. When we serve others, we serve God.:**

It makes life more meaningful:

"...long ago God planned that we should spend our lives in helping others."
Ephesians 2:10 (LB)

"Have our people learn to live their life in doing good, to provide for real needs...not live useless lives." Titus 3:14 (GN)

Invest your life serving others: Man was made for ministry in the most practical ways.

"Only those who give their lives away for my sake will know what it means to truly live." Mark 8:35 (LB)

It makes me like Christ.

"Look out for each other's interests, not just for your own. The attitude you should have is the one that Jesus Christ had." Phillipians 2:4-5 (GN)

"I did not come to be served, but to serve..." (Jesus) Matthew 20:28

I will be rewarded in eternity:

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You've been faithful with a few things: I will put you in charge of many things. Come share your Master's happiness!" Matthew 25:21
Well done = affirmation from God; Come share your Master's happiness=celebration;
Put you in charge = promotion.

II. **How to have a ministry at work.**

Accept others unconditionally. We are to accept others regardless of their behavior.

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." Romans 15:7

We are to “take Jesus as He is to people as they are.” Pastor Mark Evans

Encourage others continually. Remember those who need it the most deserve it the least.

“Encourage one another and build each other up...” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

“...speak only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” Ephesians 4:29

Forgive others freely. I’ll never have to forgive anyone more than God has forgiven me.

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Colossians 3:13

Help others willingly.

“Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it. Never tell your neighbor to wait until tomorrow if you can help him now.” Proverbs 3:27-28 (GN)

Two Ways to minister to others at work:

- Offer forgiveness – they’ll blow it, it’s a promise!
- Ask for forgiveness when you blow it. Be big enough to accept responsibility for your part.

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. 1 Cor 15:58 NIV

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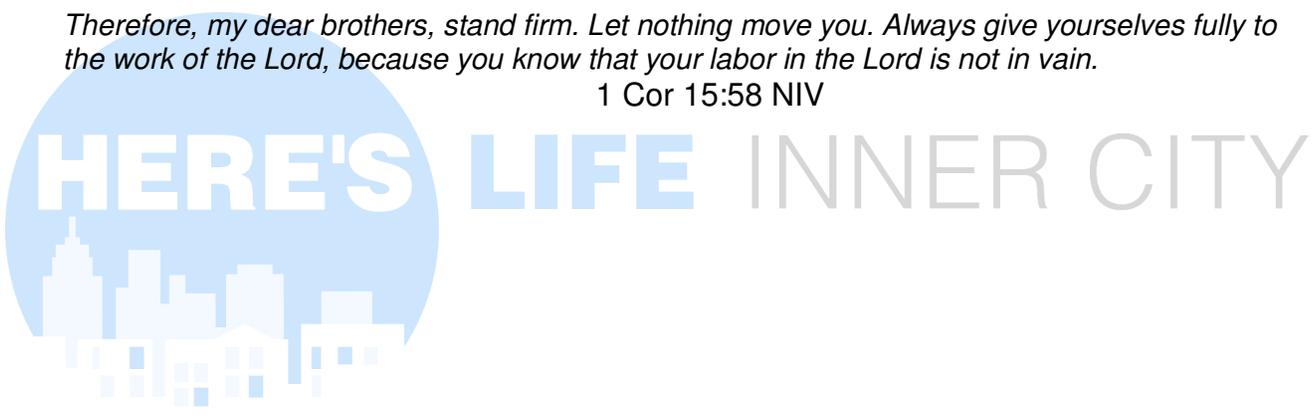
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1 Cor 15:58 NIV



You Got to Have Faith

As we take a look at faith, we're going to see how we put it to work in our life.

- All that God wants to do in your life, he does on the basis of faith. EVERYTHING!!
- Even an atheist has faith! The difference is, what you put your faith in and how much you have! That's the big difference.

Look at Matt. 9:29 at the top of your notes.

What is Faith?

- It's not **DESIRE!** –not just wishing something will happen
- It's also not **PRETENDING!** – stop “conning yourself”
- It's not a **FEELING!** Sometimes feelings are the exact opposite of faith. Feelings can mess you up! Typical emotions: fear, and anger –can paralyze you.
- It's not wishing and hoping, pretending, and it's not a feeling.
- What you feel like doing and what God wants you to live and act out in faith can be totally different!

Faith **IS**: **POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS.** Confidence, expecting the best and confidence in who God is

- It's an attitude of confidence, it is expecting the best!.
- Many people in life sets themselves up for failure and fail because they knew they couldn't do it.
- We become victims of our own expectations a lot of times.

God has established “The Law of Expectations.”

- That law is: we tend to get what we expect out of life.
- Our expectations influence all of our lives: our career, our families, our attitudes, our marriages.
- Matt. 9:29 (top of the page) according to your faith. You get to choose how much God blesses you, according to YOUR faith.
- It all comes down to expectations.

There are two basic life Philosophies: You can live by **FAITH** or **FEAR.**

Job – Job 3:25 *“That which I feared in my life has happened to me.”*

- He focused on what he didn't want, instead of what he wanted.
- That which he feared the most became the focus of his life.
- What we focus on, we become.

Paul.. II Tim 1:12 *“I am confident that what I expect will happen.”*

- What are you expecting?
- He believed that God is able, and that's the key!

An Example of the Power of Expecting the Best

- In I Sam 17:1-52 we're going to look at a story of an example of positive expectation. We'll look at it and then I'll give you some practical steps on how to develop and increase the power of expectation in your life.
- We're going to look at David and Goliath, a familiar story.
- Goliath was a giant and everyone was afraid of him. In verse 11 of I Sam 17: on hearing the Philistines words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and afraid.
- Whenever Goliath would speak, they were all scared to death.
- Along came this teen-ager who had been tending sheep, named David, who said, "I'm not afraid. God has helped me fight lions and bears. I'll fight this giant."
- You see, David has a high level of expectation.
- Go to verse 32. Read it. God down to verse 37 and read it.
- While everyone else was saying he's too big to fight, David steps up and says he's too big to miss. I'll take him on!!
- Write this down in your notes: he has a different perspective!

In your notes, write this down: Expecting the best **HONORS GOD.**

- You should increase your level of expectation because it honors God.
- Read I Sam. 17:46-67. He's painting a good word picture here for Goliath.
- Letting Goliath know what will happen before it happens.
- David, a teen-ager, expects the most before it happens.
- Nothing pleases God more than your great expectations
- It becomes an opportunity for God to step up to the plate in your life!
- The Bible says, "*Without faith, it is impossible to please God.*"
- Here David is saying I'm going to bring honor to God.

The second thing that happens: Expecting the best **INCREASES MY ABILITY.**

- Every athlete knows that attitude is the winning edge. Those who expect to win do better than those who expect to lose.
- It's not ability alone, it's the heart to win as well. In I Sam. 17:48-49 it says, "*As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone he slung it in his slingshot and struck the Philistine on the forehead.*"
- That was the only part of his body not covered by armor.
- David's ability is tremendous, and he had tremendous expectations, and God worked! You might say, "But I don't have great ability to see these things happen." God can compensate for your lack of ability, if you raise your level of expectation.
- God will help you do what you can't normally do!
- That's the whole point here! David is only a small teen-ager, but he stepped up and had a high level expectation, and GOD increased his ability.
- He'll bring you up to meet the challenge, when you live in faith and raise your level of expectation. That's when he increases our ability.

The third thing that happens: Expecting the best **ENCOURAGES OTHER PEOPLE.**

- We know that optimism and enthusiasm are contagious, but so is FAITH! I Sam 17:51-52 READ There is now a major attitude change in the Israelite army.
- Everyone wants to get on the "winning" team. They're motivated, inspired and encouraged by David, because David was willing to expect the best.
- Some people are willing to only see the potential problems in life. Whatever it is, you see what's wrong with something.
- So let's talk about how you develop a more positive personality. We've seen what happened in David's life, but let's see how we do it every day. We're going to raise your level of faith. That's where we start.
- Excitement, expectations, positively encourages others.

How to develop a more positive personality.

Let me challenge you do do something: Start your day off with God!

10-15 min – whatever works for you.

- I. Start your day with **Faith not doubt.** Ps. 5:3 Read it. Circle wait.
 - The key here is that in the morning you start your day, not in a doubt mode, but what can God do today.
 - God says start your day with faith and great expectations.
 - Start your day by asking God to help you today.
 - You might start with inspirational music that will lift you up for the day.
 - Take time to read your Bible in the morning.
 - Start your day with faith and great expectations.

- Look for something good in **everyone and everything.**
 - Don't look at the negative.
 - Rom 8:28 Problems can be solved with God's help.
 - Whatever it is, God can take care of it.
 - You don't deny a problem—you defy it in the name of the Lord.
 - A negative Christian is an insult to God.
 - You need to start every day with faith, looking for good in everyone and everything.

3. Watch your **words.** Read Eph. 4:29
 - If you're going to learn to live by faith, you have to learn to watch the way you talk. Words are incredibly powerful!
 - Your words affect you and those around you.
 - It will affect how people relate to you and how you think about yourself.
 - There's three phrases you need to take out of your vocabulary: 1) What if? It's a statement of doubt, not faith. 2) I can't—which is a contradiction of Phil 4:13, which says, "**I CAN do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**" 3) Yes, but! But is always followed by what can go wrong.
 - Watch your words! Your mood and outlook will begin to change and your level of faith will increase.

4. Read I Cor. 15:33

Associate with **positive people** and **avoid complainers.**

- Watch your relationships and friendships, because they have a profound impact in your life. Do not be deceived.
- You become like those you are around.
- I Tim. 6:4,5 people who complain and negative are listed with those you are to stay away from. They are often fearful, insecure and get defensive because something has been threatened in their life.
- To make your dreams come true, you have to work out those fears, and develop confidence and self-esteem and security that comes from knowing Christ, and no problem that God can't handle.
- When your faith is strengthened, then the fears and insecurities, griping and complaining, go away.

5. When you pray **thank God in advance.** Read Mark 11:22-24.
- Believing in advance, that's faith.
 - Believing after you've got it, that's gratitude.
 - When you pray, expect God for the answer.
 - The power of expectation and the power of faith can change your life and make dreams come true.

John 10:10 the devil wants to steal, rob and destroy, Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly.

Are you going to live by fear or by faith?



LIFE INNER CITY

You Got to Have Faith

*“According to your faith it will be done unto you.”
Matt. 9:29*

I. What is Faith?

- It's not **DESIRE.**
- It's not **PRETENDING.**
- It's not **FEELING.**

Faith is **POSITIVE EXPECTATION.**

God has established “The Law of Expectations”

Two Life Philosophies:

- Job...
“That which I feared in my life has happened to me.” Job 3:25
- Paul...
*“I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”
II Timothy 1:12*

II. An Example of the Power of Expecting the Best

I Samuel 17:1-52 (David and Goliath)

- Expecting the best **honors God.**
“This day the Lord will hand over to me and I will strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcass of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All these gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves, but the battle is the Lord's and He will give all of you into our hands.” I Samuel 17:46-67
- **Expecting the best** increases my ability.
“As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone he slung it in his slingshot and struck the Philistine on the forehead.” I Samuel 17:48-49
- **Expecting the best** encourages other people.
“David ran and he stood over Goliath after he had killed him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he had killed him he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw their hero was dead, they turned and ran. Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. I Samuel 17:51-52

How to develop a more positive personality.

1. Start your day with **faith not doubt.**

“Morning by morning O Lord, You hear my voice. Morning by morning I lay my requests before you and I wait in expectation.” Psalm 5:3

2. Look for something good in **everyone and everything.**

“And we know all things work together for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to His purpose.” Rom 8:28

3. Watch your **words.**

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building up others, according to their needs that it may benefit.” Ephesians 4:29

4. Associate with **positive people** and avoid **complainers.**

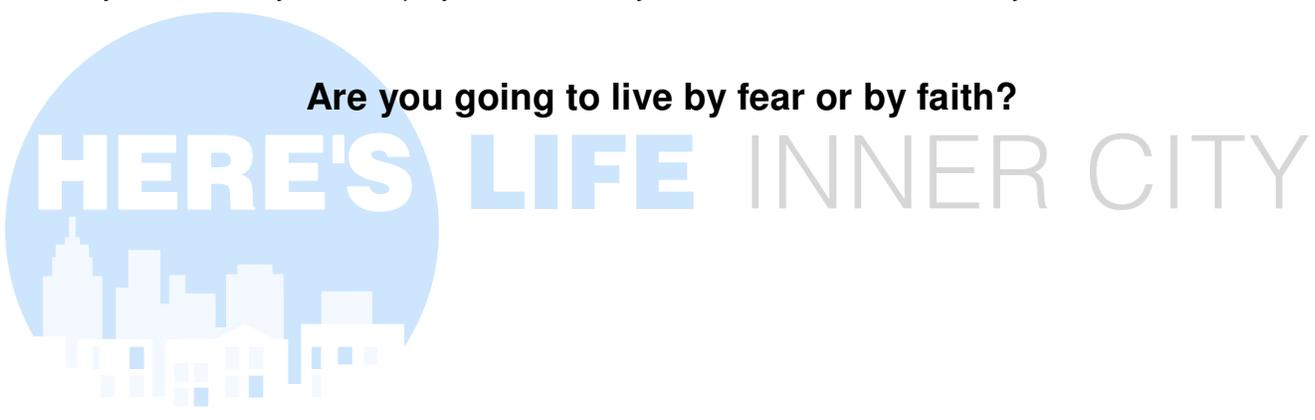
“Bad company corrupts good character.” I Corinthians 15:33

5. When you pray **thank God in advance.**

“Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go throw yourself in the sea and does not doubt in his heart but believes what he says will happen, then it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received and it will be yours.” Mark 11:22-24

Are you going to live by fear or by faith?

HERE'S



LIFE

INNER CITY

God's "Can Do" Attitude for Your Life
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil. 4:13

The "I can do" attitude is a:

PERSONAL attitude:

- Salvation is personal, it's up to you to decide, and **NO ONE** can do this for you.
- **WORKING** is personal: no one will be there to get you up in the morning, no one will go out and find a job for you.
- No one can make you a **GOOD** employee. It's all up to you.
- Succeeding is personal: You **ALONE** will determine the type of person, employee, parent, neighbor, church member, community member, and friend you will be, it's all up to you.

The "I can do" attitude is a:

POSITIVE attitude:

- It's your choice to get rid of the "**CAN'TS**" of your life.
- You have to eliminate the **NEGATIVES** in your life.
- The negative **PERSON** lives with the slogan "I can't".
- They live in the stagnant that stops them from moving into the **POSITIVE**.
- Negative holds you back and stifles what **GOD** has in mind for your life.

The "I can do" attitude is a:

PERFORMING attitude:

- It's an **ACTION** word.
- It moves toward a **GOAL**.
- It puts life into **MOTION** and shows you who you are and "Whose" you are.
- It shows you that you are a **CHILD** of God.
- It shows you that God is blessing your **WORK** regardless of where you work. On the docks, driving a truck, programming a computer, or pounding the pulpit.
- God will bless your **PERFORMANCE**. He'll give you the strength you need.

Steps to an attitude adjustment:

CONTEMPLATE your present position:

- Make a **SELF**-assessment
- Make a sight **ADJUSTMENT** .

CONSIDER your past path:

- Make a full **STOP**
- Stop living in past **SAD** situation
- Stop lingering in past **SUCCESS** stories

Make a FRESH start

- Start with new **RESOLVE**
- Start with **REALISTIC** expectations

CHOOSE your prospective prize:

- Put your plan into **MOTION**
- Place your **PRIORITIES** on the mission

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Phil 3:13-14

God's "Can Do" Attitude for Your Life - Participant

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil. 4:13

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REACHING YOUR DREAMS

Genesis 24:1-57

Eliezar's search for a wife for Isaac shows
us the ten steps of successful goal setting.

Instructors Notes

Everyone has a dream but because of fear or laziness, few dreams come true. We can always come up with reasons why we can't chase our dream. But this....

Illustration: Maybe you can relate to Simone in the movie, Pee-Wees Big Adventure, here she is talking to Pee Wee in the jaws of a dinosaur.

<VIDEO>

God places dreams in you and he wants to join you on the road to realizing them.

Today we are going to look at the story about Abraham's servant, Eliezar. In this story there are ten practical steps on how to reach your dreams.

You cannot skip any of these steps. They are a process Gods process ----- for how to reach your goals.

This chapter talks more about success than any other chapter in the Bible. Follow these steps – they will help you reach your goals.

1. You must determine Your Position

You got to evaluate your present condition. Do a self assessment. Honestly look at your own life. If I were to call you and wanted to come over to your house and I asked "How can I get to your house?" What would you say first? "Where are you?" That's the starting point!

In Genesis 24:1

Abraham had a problem. God had promised that thought him and his son the Jewish nation would be blessed and born. Yet Abraham is getting old and he still doesn't have a wife for Isaac. He says, *"I have a problem here and this is my position."*

ASK:

- Where am I now?
- Why am I here?
- What would I like to change?

Abraham was old, he still had no wife for Isaac, time was running out.

The Point: You are never to old to begin on a dream!

2. You must define your purpose

If you're going to read your goal you must clearly define your purpose --- Be precise -----get a picture of it (remember last week David gone Goliath a picture of what was going to happen)

Visualize it – a clear cut image. Focus on your target. Abraham knew exactly what he wanted

Genesis 24:2-4

ASK:

- Where do I really want to be?
- What do I really want?
- How will I know when I get there?

Abraham also knew exactly what he didn't want. He brought Eliezar in and said, "Put your hand on my thigh and make a vow." In those days they would make a covenant by putting their hands on the thigh, because the thigh is the strongest muscle of the body. He is saying, "With all your strength I want you to make a vow to me that you will not get a wife for Isaac from the pagans but I want a girl from my own country/same faith/beautiful/virgin/servant's attitude. Abraham knew exactly what he wanted and what he didn't want----- there was no doubt in Eliezar's mind.

Set a goal ----- Be Specific!

There is a typical reaction when people have a dream. The automatic thing is to start looking at the problems. This was Eliezar's reaction.

Genesis 24:5

"What If"

"What If" will kill your dream every time. He began to have fear and fear will paralyze your faith.

You have to have clear definition/confidence

3. You must discover a promise

You don't look at your own resources or abilities or what you can do ----- You look at God! You look at what he wants to do. You find a promise ----- You don't worry with the "Hows" and all the problems. That comes later. This is what gave Eliezar the confidence.

Genesis 24:7

Underline "promised"

Eliezar had confidence because God had said it. When you know God is on your side your confidence soars.

ASK:

- What can God do?

4. You must describe the profit

Every goal must have a payoff or you are not motivated to achieve it. There has to be a reward, payoff, profit. Settle the value of the goal in your mind and say "I'm going to give my time and energy to this because I know it's worth it. There's value.

ASK:

- Why do I want it?"
- What is the reward?
- How will I feel when I achieve it?

What motivated Eliezar?

Genesis 24:7

Isaac would get a wife and God's purpose would be fulfilled.

You have to describe the profit up front.

Reasons:

1. If keeps you from giving up.
2. When you settle the "Why" (payoff) God will eventually show you the "How"

5. You must desire in Prayer

Mark 11:24 "Whatsoever things you desire, pray and believe and you shall have them."

ASK:

- How often do I pray about it?

You may have never thought about it but your prayer life reveals two things:

1. It reveals your desire. How much do you pray about it? A lot of times God delays an answer, delays a goal/dream, just to see if you mean business. Are you praying about it?
2. It shows your reliance on God. My prayer life shows how much I'm trusting God to help me.

Genesis 24:12

Eliezar prays for success. It is okay to pray for success if it helps others/brings glory to God. Don't say "Lord if it be thy will" say "Lord I want to succeed so it helps other people, so it blesses me and so it glorifies you!"

Eliezar prayed continually. He prayed:

- *(verse 12) before he went
- *(verse 15) after he arrived
- *(verse 52) in front of the family

During the project/the dream he is constantly praying:

6. You must diagnose the problems.

Identify the roadblocks, obstacles, the things that are holding you back.

ASK:

- Why don't I have the goal already?

Eliezar had all kinds of problems. Just consider the proposal.

*(verse 21) find the right girl

*(verse 49) get the consent of parents

*(verse 58) convince her to go home with him

In your dream/goal – what's the problems? You look at the problems so you can start working on them.

7. You must design a plan

You must design a plan to overcome the problems in reaching your goal. Plan out a specific course of action.

ASK:

- How do I intend to get there?
- How long will it take?

Eliezar's plan is a masterpiece.

Verse 10 "Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and he left taking with him all kinds of good things from his master."

He loads up 10 camels with incentives for this new bride.

Verse 53 says there was gold and jewelry, silver, clothing.

He goes and takes the camels in verse 11 it says he comes to city of Nahor and has the camels kneel down outside the town by the well. Every evening the women would come out and get water at the well and go back in.

Verse 13-15 he sets up a test.

"I'm going to get my camels to kneel here. I will stand and wait. When the ladies come out I will ask whoever I feel compelled to – to give me a drink of water. If she gives me a drink and then offers to water all my camels, I'll know she's then right one!

Why did he do this"? Because he was looking at her character/servant attitude
Watering ten camels was a major task.

In Verse 15 after he prays, Rebekah walks out. She is beautiful/virgin/character. If she passes the test then he will show her the wealth.

Then he will ask about her family – meet her parents and ask "will you go back with me?"

He set up a plan with logical order.

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You've got to know where you are going and how to get there.

8. You must discipline your personality

It takes discipline to do anything significant.

ASK:

- How do I need to grow?

While you're working on the goal/dream

* God is working on you

- What kind of person will you need to be to reach your goal?

Eliezar is a perfect example of discipline.

Areas of Discipline:

*Decisions Verse 21

not impulsive

*Appetite Verse 33

long journey – 1st let me tell you why

KEY

- Anytime you're trying to reach your goal sometimes you have to defer personal pleasure.

* Words Verse 49

He's tactful. Control your words

*Time Verse 56

He moves ahead – no procrastination

DISCIPLINE!

9. You must deposit the price

Every goal/dream has a price tag. A price in terms of time, energy, money, reputation.

Some people only want to reach their goals if their convenient. It takes a commitment.

*Paying the price is a test of our faith

ASK:

- What will it cost?
- What am I willing to give?
- Is it worth it?

Eliezar says YES!

Genesis 24:53

You spell that BRIBE.

He deposited the price.

Your goal/dream will cost you! (pay the price)

10. You must depend on people

God chooses to work through people. Aren't we suppose to depend on God? Yes. But God uses people.

Success is never a one man show. It takes teamwork, people working together ----- In your personal, In the church

ASK:

- Am I a team player?

Genesis 24:49

Eliezar did all he could to cooperate with Rebekah's family. He wants direction – are they in?

Read Genesis 24:50-51

Dreams can come true

Illustration: No one would have guessed that Nov. 22, 1963 would have ended with Secret Service agents running wildly to try to stop an event out of control. By night a nation lost its leader – and everyone was reminded that fairy tales do end – sometimes it's not happily ever after.

President Kennedy's death drove home the words of Job: "Man born of a woman has but a few days".

Today on a tomb where John F. Kennedy was laid to rest is a simple inscription

John F Kennedy
1917-1963

1st date records when he entered into time

2nd date marks his exit

All he accomplished is now simply a slash between two dates. That is all life ends up being for all of us – the gap between dates etched on a stone.

It all comes down to this:

The question isn't how long we live but how well we live

**Go for your dreams today
Pray for Courage, Wisdom, Inspiration, Motivation
DREAMS: Goals that change us and honor you**

REACHING YOUR DREAMS

Genesis 24:1-57

Eliezar's search for a wife for Isaac shows
us the ten steps of successful goal setting.

1. You must determine your POSITION.

"Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed him in every way." Genesis 24:1

ASK:

- Where am I now?
- Why am I where I am?
- What would I like to change in my life?

2. You must define your PURPOSE.

"... go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac." Genesis 24:2-4

ASK:

- Where do I really want to be?
- What do I really want?
- How will I know when I get there?

"What if the woman's unwilling to come back with me?" Genesis 24:5

3. You must discover a PROMISE.

"The Lord . . . spoke to me and promised me saying 'To your offspring I will give this land. He will send His angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son there.'"

ASK:

- What can God do?

4. You must describe the PROFIT.

"...so that you can get a wife for my son there." Genesis 24:7

ASK:

- Why do I want it?
- What is the reward?
- How will I feel when I achieve it?

REASONS:

5. You must desire in PRAYER.

"There he prayed, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, give me success today . . ." Genesis 24:12

ASK:

- How often do I pray about it?

6. You must diagnose the PROBLEMS.

Genesis 24:21; 49; 58

- ✓ Find the right girl.
- ✓ Get the consent of her parents.
- ✓ Convince the girl to go home with him.

ASK:

- Why don't I have the goal already?

7. You must design a PLAN.

Genesis 24:10-15

ASK:

- How do I intend to get there?
- How long will it take?

8. You must discipline your PERSONALITY.

Genesis 24:21; 33;49; 50

ASK:

- How do I need to grow?

AREAS OF DISCIPLINE:

9. You must deposit the PRICE.

"Then the servant brought out the gold and the silver jewelry and the articles of clothing and he gave them to Rebekah and he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother." Genesis 24:53

ASK:

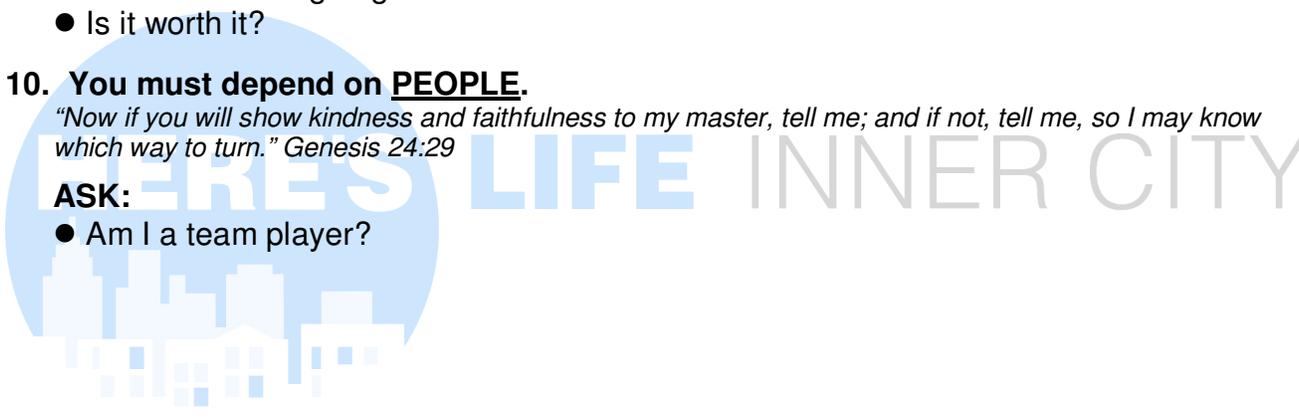
- What will it cost me?
- What am I willing to give?
- Is it worth it?

10. You must depend on PEOPLE.

"Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn." Genesis 24:29

ASK:

- Am I a team player?



How to Have a Successful Life

How to enjoy the rest of your life.

Phillipians 3:12-21

“Join with others in following my example, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.” vs. 17

Paul’s Pattern for Successful Living

I. **Evaluation: Face my faults**

- Commit to continual improvement

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect... I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it”. vs. 12-13

- Successful people never stop growing

“I don’t claim that I have already succeeded or become perfect.” (GN)

“You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you.” Proverbs. 28:13 (GN)

- *Transparency is the mark of the emotionally mature*

Question: **Where do I need to change?** - Take a personal inventory

II. **Elimination: Forget the Former**

Stop being manipulated by my memories

“Buy this one thing I do; forgetting what’s behind...” vs. 13b

- *Don’t wasted your time on yesterday*

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing!” (says the Lord). Isaiah 43:18

- *Successful people learn from the past but don’t dwell on it*

What to forget: **Your Failures** - Move ahead, God has a work for you to do

Jesus said, “ Anyone who starts to plow and then keeps looking back is of no use for the kingdom of God.” Luke 9:62 (GN)

Question: **What memory do I need to let go of?**

III. **Concentration: Focus on the Future**

- *Successful people are goal oriented*

But this ONE THING I do...straining toward what is ahead I press on toward the goal...” vs. 13c

- *Focus your life on what counts*

“Do you not know that in a race all the runner run, but only one gets the prize. Run in such a way as to win the prize.” 1 Cor. 9:24

- *What you get by reaching your goal is not vital but what you become as a result of it is what matters*

Question: *What is my **Goal** ?*

“So we make our goal to please Him...” *2 Cor. 5:9*

Question: ***What am I living for?** – Ask God, He has the answer*

IV: Determination: Fight to the Finish

“ ... I press on ...straining...I press on to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” *Phil. 3:14*

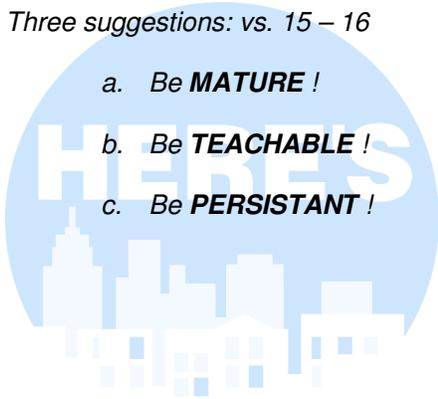
“But I reckon my own life to be worth nothing to me, in order that I may complete my mission and finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do, which is declare the Good News of the grace of God.” *Acts 20:24*

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord...will award to me on that day...” *2 Tim. 4:4 – 8*

- *Hang in there, even when you lose your focus, get back on target*

Three suggestions: vs. 15 – 16

- a. *Be **MATURE** !*
- b. *Be **TEACHABLE** !*
- c. *Be **PERSISTANT** !*



LIFE INNER CITY

How to Have a Successful Life

How to enjoy the rest of your life.

Phillipians 3:12-21

“Join with others in following my example, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.” vs. 17

Paul’s Pattern for Successful Living

IV. Evaluation: Face my faults

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect... I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it”. vs. 12-13

“I don’t claim that I have already succeeded or become perfect.” (GN)

“You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you.” Proverbs. 28:13 (GN)

Question: Where do I need to change?

V. Elimination: Forget the Former

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“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing!” (says the Lord). Isaiah 43:18

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Three suggestions: vs. 15 – 16

- d. Be **MATURE** !
- e. Be **TEACHABLE** !
- f. Be **PERSISTANT** !



LIFE INNER CITY

How to Enjoy Any Job

"Do you see people skilled in their work? They will work for kings, not for ordinary people."
Prov. 22:29 (NCV)

Never Stop **LEARNING**

"...those who love learning will succeed." Prov. 19:8(NCV)

Learn from **CRITICS**

"Anyone who loves learning accepts correction, but a person who hates being corrected is stupid." Prov. 12:1 (NCV)

Learn from **FAILURES**

"For though a righteous man fall seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity." Prov. 24:16 (NIV)

Learn from **GOD**

"Only the Lord gives wisdom; He gives knowledge and understanding." Prov. 2:6 (NCV)

Always be **WILLING** to stick with it.

"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty." Prov. 21:5 (NIV)

It takes diligence and patience to have significance in work. Haste is the enemy of diligence.

"Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth." Prov. 10:4 (NIV)

Procrastination is the assassin of motivation.

There are three kinds of people:

One gets behind and **PUSHES**

One gets ahead and **LEADS**

One sits and **WATCHES**

Which are you?

"Those who work their land will have plenty of food, but the one who chases empty dreams is not wise." Prov.12:11 (NCV)

Row the boat God puts you in:

"Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer, or ruler, yet it stores its provision in summer and gather its food at harvest."
Prov.6:6-8 (NIV)

Look to the ants (one of the smallest of God's creatures):

They are social insects

They have kings/queens

They have amazing diligence

They are self-motivated

They don't quit
They work patiently and tenaciously

Always have **INTEGRITY**
This brings God great pleasure.

"The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out."
Prov. 10:9 (NIV)

"The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are His delight." Prov.11:1

Never stop **SERVING**

"Workers who tend a fig tree are allowed to eat its fruit. In the same way, workers who protect their employer's interest will be rewarded." Prov. 27:18(NLT)

A servant attitude can make every job a joy!

There are two types of workers:
Those who do the work
Those who want the credit

Which are you?

"Whoever want to become great among you must serve the rest of you like a servant."
Matt.20:26 (NCV)

"Commit your work to the Lord and then your plans will succeed." Prov.16:3

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."
Col.3:23 (NIV)

Following the wisdom of scripture makes any job enjoyable!

How to Enjoy Any Job

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Participant's Notes

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HOW TO KEEP ON BELIEVING

Have you ever been in a hurry when God wasn't? One of the most difficult things in life is to sit in God's waiting room. God's waiting room is when there is something beyond your control that you can't speed up and you have to wait on God.

Ecc 3:11

That's true isn't it? We don't always know what God is doing and we don't know when he's going to do it. So much of life we spend waiting on God's timetable. Today we are going to conclude "How to make your dreams come true" by looking at how do you keep on believing while your waiting on God. We're going to look at Abraham. If any man had to wait it was Abraham. God gave him a promise that she would have a baby who would become a great nation – Israel. But Abraham had to wait 100 years for that baby.

What do you do while you're waiting on God?

1. Understand the six phases of Faith

God always takes you through predictable phases and stages of faith. You will hear me talk about these more through out this year. But this morning I want to introduce these to you. This is how God always works in a person's life.

Phase 1: A Dream

God gives you a dream – an idea, a goal, an ambition. Nothing starts happening until somebody starts dreaming. And at age 75 God gave Abraham a dream. God said "You are going to be the father of a great nation." – But that's just the start –

Phase 2: Decision

A decision is when you decide to act on that dream. A dream without a decision is worthless. And every dream of God has a risk to it. You have to take a step of faith.

Genesis 12:4

Abraham had to leave his homeland and go to a place he never knew he had never even heard of. So he took a risk.

Phase 3: Delay

A dream is never fulfilled instantly. When God gives you an idea of what he wants to do in your life and when he actually fulfills it there is always a time gap because he wants to grow you. Eleven years after God gave Abraham his dream Abraham still didn't have a child.

Genesis 16:1 (86 years old)

What happened in those eleven years? NOTHING! HE is just waiting on God.

Phase 4: Difficulty

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God not only lets you wait for a while but while you wait he lets you have some problems. Things go from bad to worse to impossible. Abraham is 99 and his wife Sarah is 89.

Genesis 17:17

What's worse is that God changed Abraham's name. His name originally was Abram and God changed his name to Abraham that means "Father of a great nation"

Imagine this: Somebody asks Abraham?

Q – "What's your name?"

A – "Father of a great nation"

Q _ "How many kids do you have?"

A – "None"

Q – "How old are you?"

A – "99"

That's kind of embarrassing. It's a test of his faith. But eventually God fulfills the dream and at age 100 and wife is 90, they have miracle baby. They name him Isaac that means "laughter." Because they laughed at the thought. They have a miracle boy – then comes the most difficult phase of all.

Phase 5: Dead End

Gen 21

At dead end God allows your dream to seemingly die. God ask Abraham to give up the child. Abraham waits a hundred years and has a baby. He starts to grow up then God says "Now, I want you to sacrifice him to me."

Abraham feels pretty helpless.

How do you know when you're at a dead end with your dream?

- You feel hopeless –

Some of you are at a dead end right now ... Your marriage ... your career ... your budget ... your friendships.

When you are at this stage you start to doubt Gods wisdom and love – you think "Why is this happening to me?" – Its out of your control –

Congratulations! God is getting you ready! HE is preparing you for the final phase of faith.

Phase 6: Deliverance

The greater the dead end, the more hopeless the situation , the greater the deliverance is going to be... the more of a miracle its going to be.

Genesis 22:12

Our impossibilities are simply Gods opportunities. God wants to provide " a lamb" in your life... in your dream.

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Everyone in this room – God is going to take you through these six phases of faith many times in your life. All of us are in one of these stages right now - in our dream.

2. You must remember what God can do

The situation may be out of Gods control. So, don't focus on what you cant do. Focus on what God can do. What can God do?

Romans 4:17

That is the definition of a miracle.

A miracle is when:

1. God gives live to something that was dead
2. He creates something out of nothing.

Jesus said – *Luke 18:27*

Notice something very important – Abraham put his faith in God. He believed in God.

I believe in positive thinking. But positive thinking and faith are not the same thing. Positive thinking works in one situation. IT works in one situations where you have control over the situation. But positive thinking is worthless when things are out of your control. When you come to a dead end you need more than just a nice happy thought. You need faith in God. At a dead end remember what God can do.

3. Always rely on what god had promised.

Romans 4:18

Underline “when hope was dead within him” ever felt that way? Like hope was dying inside of you? You start using the work “never”

- “I’m never going to be happy.”
- “I’m never going to have a baby”
- “I’m never going to get married”
- “I’m never going to change.”

What do you do when hope starts to die within you?

Circle “hoping in faith”

You keep on believing.

How do you keep on believing when you feel like doubting? When you feel like giving up?

The Bible says “He relied on Gods word’ Nothing is more reliable. He relied in Gods promises. When you come to a dead end rely on the promise.

Hebrews 11:17

This is a test. Isaac grows up and God says I want you to give him back to me. I want you to sacrifice him to me. But Abraham didn't panic. WHY? Because he had the promises of God.

Here's the big test in your life: What are you going to do when Gods says I want you to sacrifice our greatest dream? That is the ultimate test of faith. When God says - the thing

you value the most – offer it to me. This is a test. Will you do what Abraham did? Will you hope against hope? Will you rely on Gods promises?

Romans 4:18

Circled “seemed”

Things are never as bleak as then seem if you look at them from Gods point of view. Circle “exactly” A promise is only as good as the integrity of the promiser. And God cannot lie.

4. Face the facts in faith

Romans 4:19 -20
Romans 4:19 Gods word

Abraham doesn’t deny the facts that he is 99 and his wife is 89. He faces them with faith.

Faith does not ignore reality. Faith does not pretend you don’t have problem. Faith is facing the facts in your life without being discouraged by them. Maybe for you things have not turned out as you planned. Facing the facts in faith says “I believe God had a better plan” That is faith. “Things did not turn out the way I thought but I believe God is not through with my life.” I have said that from the beginning of our church – its an old cavalry rule- *When the horse is dead – dismount* don’t keep beating a dead horse. When a dream is dead – you dismount because God has another one for you!
YOU KEEP ON BELIEVING!

5. Expect God to Act In Your Life

You expect = God to act and do things in your life even if its not the way you planned,

Romans 4:20-21

Notice “even before it happened.” That is real faith. I’ve talked about this in this series. The highest form of faith is thanking God in advance. When you are at a dead end – you thank God in advance that He is going to work it out. You are expecting God to deliver when God delivers there are 3 kinds of deliverance.

3 KINDS OF DELIVERANCE

1. Circumstantial

This is where God changes the situation. HE miraculously turns the situation around. God will do his many times in your life – But not always.

2. Personal

He changes you. You get a bigger perspective, you age a deeper faith. You get a larger character. HE leaves the situation alone – but he changes you.

3. Ultimate (Heaven)

Some pain is only relieved through heaven. God has not promises to take away all your pain/difficulty/he has not said you will never have any dead ends or delays. But he has promised that one day ultimately he will deliverer you to Heaven where there is no more sorrow or pain.

Romans 5:2

What is the glory of God? HEAVEN. But there is only one way to get there – through Jesus Christ. The bible work for “Deliverance” is ‘Salvation’. That’s what “Salvation” means =JESUS CHRIST is your SAVIOR/DELIEVERER.

Only way to make your dreams com true is to ask Jesus to be our savior.

Pray

Father some today face impossibilities for their dream it will take deliverance – a miracle – pray that they see your promised come true – act in each persons life here today.



HOW TO KEEP ON BELIEVING

"...God does everything just right and on time, but people can never completely understand what He is doing." Eccl. 3:11 (NCV)

How to Keep on Believing While You're Waiting on God

1. Understand the Six Phases of Faith

Phase 1: A DREAM (age 75)

(God) "I will make you into a great nation . . ." Genesis 12:1-3

Phase 2: DECISION

"So Abraham left as the Lord had told him to . . ." Genesis 12:4

Phase 3: DELAY (age 86)

"But Sarah still had not borne any children . . ." Genesis 16:1

Phase 4: DIFFICULTY (age 99)

"How can a son be born to a man my age?" Genesis 17:17

Phase 5: DEAD END

"Take your only son, whom you love, and sacrifice him . . ." Genesis 21:1-6, 22:1-12

Phase 6: DELIVERANCE

(God) "Don't hurt the boy . . . I've provided a lamb . . ." Genesis 22:12-14

2. You must remember what GOD CAN DO.

"Abraham believed in God who gives life to the dead and who creates something out of nothing." Romans 4:17 (NCV)

"What is impossible with men is possible with God." Luke 18:27 (NIV)

3. Always rely on what GOD HAS PROMISED.

"When hope was dead within him, Abraham went on hoping in faith . . . He relied on the word of God." Romans 4:18 (Ph)

"While God was testing him, Abraham still trusted in God and His promises, so he offered his son Isaac . . ." Hebrew 11:17 (LB)

"Though it seemed Abraham's hope could not be fulfilled . . . he did become the father of many nations, exactly as God had promised." Romans 4:18 (JB)

4. Face the facts IN FAITH.

"Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead . . . and Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he didn't waver the unbelief . . ." Romans 4:19-20a (NIV)

"Through faith he regarded the facts." Romans 4:19a (GW)

5. Expect God to ACT IN YOUR LIFE.

"Abraham never doubted. He believed God, for his faith and trust grew ever stronger, and he praised God for this blessing even before it happened. He was completely sure that God was well able to do anything He promised." Romans 4:20-21 (LB)

"Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times." Romans 12:12 (GN)

Three Kinds of Deliverance:

- **CIRCUMSTANTIAL**
- **PERSONAL**
- **ULTIMATE** (Heaven)

"We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:2 (NIV)



LIFE INNER CITY

Overcoming the Fear of My Future

"I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears."

Psalms 34:4

I. Facts About My Future

God knows everything that's going to happen.

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before His eye..." Heb. 4:13 (NIV)

The days allotted to me had all been recorded in your book before any of them ever began." Ps. 139:16 (GN)

God has a plan for my future.

"I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jer. 29:11 (NIV)

God will be with me every step of the way.

"God has said, Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Heb. 13:5

"If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself." 2 Tim. 2:13 (NIV)

"The Lord is faithful to ALL His promises..." Ps. 145:13 (NIV)

II. God's Guarantees For My Future

1. I can depend on God to guide me when I'm confused.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and He will show you the right way." Prov. 3:5-6

2. I can depend on God to assist me when I'm tempted.

"No temptation is irresistible. You can trust God to keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it, for He has promised this and will do what He says. He will show you... how to escape..." I Cor. 10:13 (LB)

3. I can depend on God to support me when I'm overwhelmed.

"When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fore of oppression, you will not be burned up... for I am the Lord your God." Is. 43:2-3 (LB)

4. I can depend on God to defend me when I'm offended.

"Never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for He has said that he will repay those who deserve it." Rom. 12:19 (LB)

5. I can depend on God to reward me when I'm faithful to Him.

"God is not unfair; He will not forget all that you have done, nor the loving labor which you have shown for His sake..." Heb. 8:10 (PH)

"I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me – I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses inner strength into me." Phil. 4:13 (Amp)

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. 2 Tim 1:7 NIV

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**For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.
2 Tim 1:7 NIV**

Earning Respect

A study revealed that the difference between top salesmen and average ones was not talent, but reputation. People trusted the top salesmen more. People want to do business with someone they respect.

The Bible says, "A good name is more desirable than great riches." Prov. 22:1
As one author put it "your self-worth is more important than your net-worth."

To earn the respect of other people, to build a good reputation you must focus on your character. The book of Proverbs says there are certain character qualities found in people who are respected by others:

1. **Respect is earned through integrity.** "Respected people do not tell lies." (17:7) "The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out." (10:9)
2. **Respect is earned through humility.** "Arrogance will bring your downfall, but if you are humble, you will be respected." (29:23) "Anyone who listens to correction is respected." (13:18)
3. **Respect is earned through dependability.** "Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give." (25:15) "He who keeps an oath even when it hurts will never be shaken." (Psalm 15:4-5)
4. **Respect is earned through having priorities.** "If your goals are good, you will be respected." (11:27) "You will earn the trust and respect of others if you work for good." (14:22)
5. **Respect is earned through generosity.** "He who gives generously to the needy and shows kindness will be powerful and respected." (Psalm 112:9)
6. **Respect is earned through putting God first in your life.** "If you want favor with both God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust the Lord completely. In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success." (3:4-6)

Earn respect today,

Earning Respect

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"He who gives generously to the needy and shows kindness will be powerful and respected." (Psalm 112:9)

6. Respect is earned through **putting God first in your life**.

"If you want favor with both God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust the Lord completely. In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success." (3:4-6)

Earn respect today

Seven Thoughts For Positive People

“Willing to Do What It Takes”

Attitude for Success

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” Joshua 1:8

I. False Measurements of Success

How I Look 1 Samuel 16:7 and Galatians 2:6 -

But the LORD said to Samuel, ***“Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”*** 1 Sam 16:7 NIV

“God does not judge by external appearance.” Gal 2:6 NIV

What I Have: Mark 8:38 and Luke 12:5 -

“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.” Mark 8:38 NIV

“But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.” Luke 12:5 NIV

Who I know:: Luke 6:26 and Galatians 1:10

“Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets”. Luke 6:26 NIV

“Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.” Gal 1:10 NIV -

Oftentimes fools are in high places.

Success is determined by **character**- what I am.

“Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else.” Galatians 6:4

A Biblical Definition of Success

(Based on the life of Apostle Paul)

Sense of Direction

“It has always been my ambition to preach the Good News where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation.” Romans 15:20

“I run straight toward the goal, in order to win the prize .” Phillipians 3:14

Jesus' had a sense of direction everyday.

"I must be about my father's business." Luke 2:49

Understanding

When you understand the problems of life you can endure them.

"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation . . ."

Phillipians 4:12

"May the Lord lead you into a greater understanding of God's love and the endurance that is given by Christ." II Thessalonians 3:5

Compassion

"I may have all knowledge...and the faith to move mountains... and may give away everything I have , but if I have not love, it does me no good." 1 Cor 13:2-3 GN

Clothe yourselves with compassion.... Col 3:12 NIV

Commitment – will pay the price to do what it takes

However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. Acts 20:24 NIV

Enthusiastic Faith

" If God be for us, who can be against us" Romans 8:31

" There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength."

Phil:4:13

Remember nothing is too hard for me in God- it's a daily walk with God.

Service to Others

" ...we carry out this service of love for the Lord's glory, and to show that we want to help." II Cor. 8:19GN

Jesus' life was that of a servant leader

Staying Power

" We re pressured on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; stuck down, but not destroyed." II Corinthians 4:8-9

- Note the first letters to these positive thoughts - S-U-C-C-E-S-S
- It spells success!

Hang in there and be willing to do what it takes.

How do you do it?

Paul's Secret Formula: II Corinthians 14:16-18

- Do not lose heart
- Renewed day by day
- Look at the eternal perspective

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How to Deal With Doubt

“My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?” Matt. 27:46

“ We are often troubled. But not crushed; sometimes in doubt. But never in despair; there are many enemies, but we are never without a friend, and though we badly hurt at times, we are not destroyed.” 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

We will have doubts, but we don't need to be defeated by them.

What causes us to doubt?

CRITICS - scoffers – people who ridicule challenge and criticize you

“ They scoff at God...How proudly they speak! And so God's people are dismayed and confused and drink it all in. ‘Does God realize what is going on?’ they ask.”

Psalm 73:8 – 11

- Fools may say there is no God.
- We are affected by critics
- Aim all your hard questions at God.

“ again and again they scoff, ‘Where is that God of yours?’ But O my soul, don't be discouraged. Don't be upset. Expect God to act!” Psalm 42:10 – 11

CONSCIENCE- guilt makes you rationalize our beliefs to fit our lifestyle.

“For some people have disobeyed their consciences and have deliberately done what they knew was wrong. It isn't surprising that soon they lost their faith in Christ, after defying God like that.” 1 Timothy 1:19

- **Your unbelief does not constitute truth**
- **God does not change the truth for you.**
- **Unbelief is an excuse to justify our lifestyle**

CIRCUMSTANCES – will make you think you're all alone

Example: The storm on Lake Galilee (Mark 4:35 –41)

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" Mark 4:35-41 NIV

- Doubts can paralyze you. We need to move on.

How to deal with your doubts

ADMIT MY DOUBTS – Be honest!

- You cannot bet beyond them without admitting you have them.

Example:
John the Baptist

“When John heard in prison...what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, “are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else?” *Matt. 11:2 3*

- *Doubt is when you don't know what God wants you to do.*
- *Unbelief is when you know what God wants you to do, but don't do it/ it's sin.*

Thomas

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." *John 20: 24 – 29*

“Be merciful to those who doubt.” *Jude 1:22*

DOUBT YOUR DOUBTS – *We doubt our belief, we must believe our beliefs.*

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” *Proverbs 3:5*

- *What do I listen to the most? My doubts? My critics? Or God?*

Begin with the **FAITH** you already have.

- *Faith is knowing, no matter how small, it is enough!*

“Lord, I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” *Mark 9:24*

- *Courage is not the absence of fear, but moving ahead in spite of your fear.*
- *“Fear is courage that said its prayers”*

“My purpose in writing is simply this: that you who believe in God’s Son will know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you have eternal life, the reality and not the illusion.”
1 John 5:13

- *Little faith plus a big God equals big results!*
- *Start where you are!*

Faith Fact:

On a bad day you will have doubts, but don't be defeated by them.

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19 Work!

We were created to work.

...and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground... *Genesis 2:5*

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. *Genesis 2:15*

Because of sin, the work became hard...not harder!

..."Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Gen. 3:17-19

Because of Christ, the work can be very rewarding.

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. *Ephesians 2:10*

To reap joy and benefits from your work, you need:

Perspective- *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.* Proverbs 23:7

Initiative - *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.* Galatians 6:9

Expectations - ***RIGHT*** expectations! *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.* 1 John 5:14

***When you join God in His plan for your life, what you do for a living
Can be fun and rewarding...AND change all of eternity.***

Restoring Dignity in your Work

Christians sadly, like our modern culture, see work as, at best, a necessary evil to be avoided whenever possible. They find no joy in their work, let alone a God-given satisfaction for a job well done. They look for ways to get out of work, or find the alternative of government assistant to sustain them through life.

Work Ethic is slowly moving toward its demise with Christians joining the thinking of others that “work is evil”. However, how does Scripture admonish us to view work?

Work was ordained by God in the Garden of Eden as a plan for mankind. Genesis 1-2 makes it clear that both Adam and Eve had jobs to do. The fall changed that and work became a burden instead of a sanctioned gift from God. When sin tainted work, like all things, work became viewed as drudgery. Christ, however, gives us a correct view of work.

During His early years, He learned his trade and “grew in stature and grace”

And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. Luke 2:40 NIV 34

As a Man, Jesus then began His ministry as ordained by God. He wasn't concerned with his “days off, vacations, retirement, or fringe benefits”. His will was to do what his Father had given him to do.

“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”

John 4:34 NIV

Jesus found satisfaction in doing what his Father told him to do. We recognize, of course, that Jesus is hardly a typical person, and it is impractical to compare ourselves with the Son of God, but Jesus' attitude toward work shows us an attitude not tainted by the worldly views.

When Adam and Eve walked with God, they found great satisfaction with their daily work. The Garden was their haven in which they took pleasure, and they relished the progress they saw as a result of their effort. We, too, can acquire this blessing as we submit to God's sanction to work.

When we lose the joy of our labor, which does tend to become routine, and sometimes even boring we are robbed of the satisfaction and abundance God intended for us. If we identify and apply the principles that Jesus followed in His work, we can once again restore dignity and reap blessings from our Heavenly Father.

Let's look at Jesus' example:

Jesus recognized for Whom He worked.

Most people when asked what they'd like to change about their job are their boss. They see their boss as the individual who signs the paycheck. As Christians we are to realize our Master is our Heavenly Father. We are to do our work unto Him.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

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Col 3:23-24 NIV

Jesus recognized that God was ultimately responsible for the results.

God can provide for your needs on a daily basis, and can multiply your resources beyond what you can imagine.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, Eph 3:20-21 NIV

Jesus understood that His work had significance.

Oftentimes we see our work as insignificant. This is the thief of motivation and excitement that leads to boredom. When we have a clear understanding that God has called each of us to a specific job that leads to the opportunity to share with the lost.

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. Heb 6:10 NIV

Jesus knew He was uniquely suited to accomplish the work God gave Him.

Find out what motivates you, then, pursue that area. God wants you to be happy in your work, not to live in a prison of dissatisfaction. No matter what your position in life is you will have the opportunity to tell others about Jesus. God calls the butcher as well as the missionary to touch others' lives with the gospel. We are ideally equipped to do God's work.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Rom 12:6-8 NIV

Jesus found all work important.

Every person has a calling and we are all equally worthy of respect and dignity. No man's labor is in vain when he recognizes Whom he is really working for. Note that any illegal profession is not a "calling" from God.

There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

1 Cor 12:6 NIV

Jesus worked with intensity.

Jesus worked hard. We see in His daily ministry there were various duties to complete and He worked dutifully to accomplish them. He focused on the opportunity at hand and demonstrated an intensity that went beyond the normal routine: on the Sabbath, while resting at the well in Samaria, early morning, and oftentimes late into the night. He enjoyed what He did and was intense in His work.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, Col 3:23-24 NIV

Yet He had the wisdom to rest when necessary and spend quality time with His Father in prayer.

Jesus was directed toward a goal.

Jesus did not work without a plan. Short and long term goals help us keep our focus. Set goal at every opportunity. Keep a day timer; prepare a timetable for family, home, work etc.

As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. John 9:4 NIV

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Finally, remember God has ordained work for our livelihood and enjoyment; it is not to be drudgery but a joy.

- Ask God to give you the right perspective on your work.
- Seek a job that will give you satisfaction and joy.
- Establish a plan to help you achieve your goals.
- Seek to separate work from leisure.
- Praise God for the opportunity to work for His kingdom glory.



Restoring Dignity in your Work – Participant’s Notes

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